

Appln. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for operating a telecommunications system comprises:
 - receiving, at a first telecommunications system, a telephone call from an external telephone line, wherein the first telecommunications system is coupled to a packetized network and connected to a telephone trunk line, wherein the telephone trunk line includes the external telephone line;
 - determining, at the first telecommunications system, that the telephone call will be transferred to an auto attendant located at process running on a remote second telecommunications system, wherein the second telecommunications system is remote from the first telecommunications system, wherein the second telecommunications system is coupled to the packetized network and connected to a telephone trunk line;
 - determining a computer network address of the remote second telecommunications system and switching data associated with the auto attendant process in response to the telephone call;
 - coupling the first telecommunications system with the remote second telecommunications system at the computer network address;
 - transmitting switching data associated with the auto attendant process from the first telecommunications system to the remote second telecommunications system via the packetized network and the Internet; and
 - coupling the telephone call to the auto attendant process located at the remote second telecommunications system in response to the switching data associated with the auto attendant;
 - wherein the first telecommunications system does not provide auto attendant functionality in response to the telephone call.

Appl. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving additional input from the external telephone line; and
transmitting the additional data to the ~~remote~~ second telecommunications system;
wherein the additional data is processed by the auto attendant located at the
~~remote~~ second telecommunications system.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the additional data
comprises data selected from the group consisting of: DTMF tones, voice data.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 ~~wherein the additional data~~
~~comprises voice data~~ further comprising:
receiving a plurality of auto attendant option data from the auto attendant process
located at the second telecommunications system in the first telecommunications system in
response to the additional data; and
outputting audio messages to the external telephone line in response to the
plurality of auto attendant option data.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 ~~further comprising receiving~~
~~response data from the auto attendant located at the remote telecommunications system, the~~
~~response data determined in response to the additional data. 4 wherein the audio messages~~
comprise menu selection messages selected from the group consisting of: dial by name menu
selection, a directory menu selection, dial by extension menu selection, call-back selection.

6-7. Canceled.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 ~~wherein the DTMF tones~~
~~represent 5~~ further comprising receiving a menu selection from the external telephone line in
response to the audio messages.

9. (Original) A telecommunications system operated according to the
method of claim 1.

Appin. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

10. (Currently amended) A method for operating a distributed telecommunications system comprises:

receiving a telephone call from an external telephone line into a first telecommunications system, wherein the first telecommunications system is coupled to a packet-based network and connected to a telephone trunk line, and wherein the telephone trunk line includes the external telephone line;

~~coupling the external telephone line to an auto attendant located at the first telecommunications system;~~

~~outputting a menu selection message to the external telephone line;~~

~~receiving input data from the external telephone line for the auto attendant located at the first telecommunications system via a wide area network, in response to the menu selection message;~~

determining a computer network address of a ~~remote~~ second telecommunications system and switching data in response to the input data from the external telephone line, wherein the second telecommunications system is remote from the first telecommunications system, wherein the second telecommunications system is coupled to the packet-based network and connected to a telephone trunk line;

coupling the first telecommunications system with the ~~remote~~ second telecommunications system located at the computer network address via the packet-based network;

transmitting switching data from the first telecommunications system to the ~~remote~~ second telecommunications system; and

coupling the telephone call to an auto attendant located at running on the ~~remote~~ second telecommunications system in response to the switching data;

receiving auto attendant menu data from the auto attendant on the second telecommunications system in the first telecommunications system via the packet-based network;
and

providing audio data to the external telephone line in response to the auto attendant menu data;

Appl. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

wherein the first telecommunications system lacks an auto attendant running thereon.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the ~~menu selection message comprises~~ audio data comprises audio selected from the group consisting of: a directory of selectable options, a directory of selectable names, a menu of options.

12-13. Canceled.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~11 13~~ wherein the ~~input data comprises DTMF tones.~~ further comprising receiving input data from the external telephone line in response to the audio data.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~11 13~~ wherein the ~~directory of selectable options comprises a directory of selectable names~~ input data comprises data selected from the group consisting of: DTMF tone, voice data.

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the ~~menu selection message is programmable~~ the first telecommunications system includes a CODEC, and wherein the second telecommunications system includes a CODEC.

Appl. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 further comprising:
~~when input data from the external telephone line is not received within a
predetermined period of time, un-coupling the external telephone line from the first
telecommunications system.~~

receiving another telephone call from an external telephone line into a third
telecommunications system, wherein the third telecommunications system is coupled to the
packet-based network and to a telephone trunk line, and wherein the telephone trunk line
includes the external telephone line;

determining the computer network address of the second telecommunications
system and switching data in response to input data from the external telephone line, wherein the
second telecommunications system is remote from the third telecommunications system;

coupling the third telecommunications system with the second
telecommunications system located at the computer network address via the packet-based
network;

transmitting switching data from the third telecommunications system to the
second telecommunications system;

coupling the other telephone call to the auto attendant running on the second
telecommunications system in response to the switching data ;

receiving additional auto attendant menu data from the auto attendant on the
second telecommunications system in the third telecommunications system via the packet-based
network; and

providing audio data to the external telephone line in response to the additional
auto attendant menu data;

wherein the third telecommunications system also lacks an auto attendant running
thereon.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 ~~wherein the period of time
is programmable.~~

Appl. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

wherein the additional auto attendant menu data and the auto attendant menu data are different.

19-20. Canceled.

21. (Currently amended) A method for operating a distributed telecommunications system comprises:

- receiving a telephone call from a telephone extension coupled to a first telecommunications system;
- selecting a routing identifier associated with ~~an~~ a centralized auto attendant located at running upon a second telecommunications system;
- determining a computer network address identifier of the second telecommunications system and connection data associated with the centralized auto attendant in response to the telephone call;
- coupling the first telecommunications system with the second telecommunications system located at the computer network address;
- transmitting connection data associated with the centralized auto attendant from the first telecommunications system to the second telecommunications system located at the computer network address via a computer network; ~~and~~
- coupling the telephone call to the centralized auto attendant ~~located at the second telecommunications system~~ in response to the connection data associated with the centralized auto attendant;
- transmitting data associated with menu options from the centralized auto attendant to the telephone extension; and
- transmitting a caller input in response to the data associated with menu options from the first telecommunications system to the centralized auto attendant.

wherein the first telecommunications system is connected to telephone lines and coupled to a packet-based network;

wherein the second telecommunications system is connected to telephone lines and coupled to the packet-based network; and

Appln. No. 09/593,821
Amdt. dated February 1, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of August 25, 2004

PATENT

wherein the first telecommunications system does not include auto attendant functionality in response to the routing identifier.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 further comprising:
receiving additional data from the telephone extension; and
transmitting the additional data to the second telecommunications system located
at the computer network address;

wherein the additional data is processed by the auto attendant located at the
second telecommunications system and not by an auto attendant on the first telecommunications system.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22 wherein ~~coupling the first telecommunications system with the second telecommunications system located at the computer network address comprises using the computer network.~~ the first telecommunications system does not have an auto attendant running thereon.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 23 wherein the ~~computer network comprises the Internet~~ centralized auto attendant is a process running on the second telecommunications system.

25-29. Canceled.